



EPA Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances

**How To Comply with the Worker Protection Standard
for Agricultural Pesticides: What Employers Need to Know
Unit 4, Part A: Protections for All Agricultural Workers**

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PART A
PROTECTIONS FOR ALL
AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

The requirements described in this part are **in addition** to the protections employers must provide to **both** workers and handlers (Unit 3).

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NOTICE ABOUT APPLICATIONS

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

(See Also Specific Duties Section Below)

Under most circumstances, **worker employers** must make sure that **workers** are notified about areas where pesticide applications are taking place or where restricted-entry intervals are in effect.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

Both Oral Warnings and Posted Signs

Some pesticide labels require you to notify workers *both* orally *and* with signs posted at entrances to the treated area. If both types of notification are required, the following statement will be in the “Directions for Use” section of the pesticide labeling under the heading “Agricultural Use Requirements”:

“Notify workers of the application by warning them orally and by posting warning signs at entrances to treated areas.”



Notification on Farms, Forests, and Nurseries

Unless the pesticide labeling requires both types of notification, notify workers *either* orally *or* by the posting of warning signs at entrances to treated areas. You must inform workers which method of notification is being used.

Notification in Greenhouses

In greenhouses, **you must post all treated areas**, except as described below. If the pesticide labeling requires both types of notification, you must also notify workers orally.

Exceptions to Worker Notification

1. **Oral warnings** need *not* be given to:

- **any** worker on your farm, forest, or nursery who will not be in the treated area, or walk within 1/4 mile of a treated area, during the pesticide application or while the restricted-entry interval is in effect,
- **any** worker who will not be in your greenhouse during a pesticide application or while a restricted-entry interval is in effect there, *or*
- **any** worker who applied (or supervised the application of) the pesticide and is aware of all of the information required to be given in the oral warning.

2. **Treated area posting** is *not* required if:

- **no** workers on your farm, forest, or nursery will be in the treated area, or walk within 1/4 mile of the treated area, during the pesticide application or while the restricted-entry interval is in effect,
- **no** workers will be in the greenhouse during the pesticide application or while the restricted-entry interval is in effect there, *or*
- the **only** workers for whom you need to post applied (or supervised the application of) the pesticide and are aware of all of the information required to be given in the oral warning.

Signs meeting these requirements should be available commercially.

Posted Warning Signs

Use WPS-design signs when you post warnings at entrances to treated areas. For a detailed description, see Requirements for Warning Signs, p. 85.

1. Location:

- **On farms, forests, and nurseries**, post the signs so they can be seen from all points where workers usually enter the treated area, including at least:
 - each access road,
 - each border with any labor camp adjacent to the treated area, and
 - each established walking route that enters the treated area.When there are no usual points of worker entry, post the signs in the corners of the treated area or in places where they will be most easily seen.
- **In greenhouses**, post the signs so they can be seen from all points where workers usually enter the treated area, including doorways, aisles, and other walking routes. When there are no usual points of worker entry to the treated area, post the signs in the corners of the treated area or in places where they will be easily seen.

2. Timing and Visibility of Warning Signs:

- Post signs 24 hours or less before the scheduled application of the pesticide.
- Keep signs posted during application and throughout the restricted-entry interval (if any),
- Remove the signs within 3 days after the end of the restricted-entry interval. If there is no restricted-entry interval for that application, remove the signs within 3 days after the end of the application.
- Keep workers out during the entire time the signs are posted, (except for trained and equipped early-entry workers entering as permitted under WPS).
- Keep signs visible and legible while they are posted.

3. Posting Adjoining Areas

When several adjoining areas are to be treated with pesticides on a rotating or sequential basis, you may post the entire area at the same time. Worker entry, except for early entry permitted by the WPS, is prohibited for the entire area while the signs are posted.

4. Design and Size

- Each warning sign must look like this:

Exception:

As an option, you may use warning signs that replace the Spanish words with the same words in another language (other than English) that is read by the largest number of your workers who do not read English. The replacement sign must meet all other requirements for the WPS warning sign.



- You may put **additional information** on the warning sign, such as the name of the pesticide or the date of application, if it does not lessen the impact of the sign or change the meaning of the required information. If you add the required information in other languages, the words must be translated correctly.

For a detailed description, see Requirements for Warning Signs, p. 85.

- The signs must be at least 14 inches by 16 inches, and the letters must be at least 1 inch high.

Exception:

On farms and forests, you may use smaller signs if the treated area is too small to accommodate 14- by 16-inch signs. For example, when a single plant needs to be posted, a smaller sign would be appropriate. In nurseries and greenhouses, you may, at any time, use a sign smaller than the standard size. Whenever a small sign is used, there are specific posting distances depending on the size of the lettering and symbol on the sign (see table below).

Sign Size	Required Height in Inches			Maximum Distance Between Signs*
	Circle Graphic	Lettering for Words "DANGER" & "PELIGRO"	Lettering for Other Words	
7" x 8" (approx.)	3"	7/8"	1/2"	50 feet
4 1/2" x 5" (approx.)	1 1/2"	7/16"	1/4"	25 feet

* This distance requirement is for places where multiple signs are used to post a single treated area, such as a field or a greenhouse section. It does not apply where individual signs are used for separate small treatment areas (such as single potted plants in a greenhouse).

*Signs with the words "DANGER" and "PELIGRO" in letters less than 7/16 inch in height **or** with any words in letters less than 1/4 inch in height **or** with the circle graphic containing an upraised hand and a stern face less than 1 1/2 inches in diameter do not meet WPS sign requirements.*

Oral Warnings to Workers

1. Content:

Oral warnings must include:

- the location and description of the treated area,
- the time during which entry is restricted, and
- instructions not to enter the treated area until the restricted-entry interval has expired.

2. Communication:

Provide oral warnings to workers in a manner that they can understand.

3. Timing:

- Workers who are on your establishment at the start of an application must be orally warned **before the application takes place**.
- Workers who are **not** on your establishment at the start of an application must be orally warned **at the beginning of their first work period** if (1) the application is still taking place or (2) the restricted-entry interval for the pesticide is in effect.

RESTRICTIONS DURING AND AFTER APPLICATIONS

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

(See Also Specific Duties Section Below)

Worker employers must take actions, described below, to protect **workers and other persons** during pesticide applications on agricultural establishments. **Worker employers** also must take actions, described below, to protect **workers** during restricted-entry intervals.



SPECIFIC DUTIES

During Applications

1. Keep everyone except appropriately trained and equipped handlers out of areas being treated with pesticides.
2. In nurseries and greenhouses, during some applications, also keep workers and other persons out of the area **immediately around** the area being treated. The size of this “keep-out zone” depends on the pesticide used and the application method. In some greenhouse situations, the greenhouse must be adequately ventilated before workers are allowed to enter (see Special Application Restrictions in Nurseries and Greenhouses, pp. 41 and 43).

During Restricted-Entry Intervals

In general, keep workers out of a treated area during the restricted-entry interval. This restriction has only two types of exceptions: (1) early entry **with no contact**, described below, and (2) early entry **with contact** for short-term, emergency, or specially excepted tasks (all described in Early Entry, p. 47). Note, however, that entry into treated areas during a restricted-entry interval is also allowed to perform handling (including crop advisor) tasks as long as the persons entering such areas are trained and equipped as pesticide handlers and receive all other applicable WPS handler protections.

*Entering either enclosed or outdoor fumigated areas to ventilate, remove tarps or other coverings used in the fumigation, or to measure air concentration levels are **handling tasks**, not early entry. Only appropriately trained and equipped handlers can do these tasks.*

RESTRICTED-ENTRY INTERVAL (REI)

The restricted-entry interval is the time immediately after a pesticide application when entry into the treated area is limited. Some pesticides have one REI, such as 12 hours, for all crops and uses. Other products have different REIs depending on the crop or method of application. When two (or more) pesticides are applied at the same time, and have different REIs, you must follow the longer interval.

Location of REIs on Labeling

The restricted-entry interval is listed on the pesticide labeling:

- under the heading “Agricultural Use Requirements” in the “Directions for Use” section of the pesticide labeling, or
- next to the crop or application method to which it applies.

Arid Area REIs

Some pesticide labeling require a different REI for arid areas. Labeling might say, for example, “72 hours in outdoor areas where average annual rainfall is less than 25 inches a year.” You can get information on average annual rainfall for your area from any nearby weather bureau, such as one located at a local airport or one affiliated with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

NO-CONTACT EARLY ENTRY

If workers **will have no contact with anything that has been treated with the pesticide** to which the restricted-entry interval applies, you may permit them to enter pesticide-treated areas when the application is finished.

1. After any inhalation exposure level listed on the product labeling has been reached or any WPS ventilation criteria have been met, you may permit workers into a treated area during an REI if they will **not touch or be touched by** any pesticide residues, including:

- **on plants**, including both agricultural plants and weeds,
- **on or in soil** or planting medium,
- **in water**, such as irrigation water or water standing in drainage ditches or puddles,
- **in air**, if pesticide remains suspended after application, such as after fumigation or after a smoke, mist, fog, or aerosol application.

*Avoiding contact by using personal protective equipment does **not** qualify as no-contact early entry.*

No-contact early-entry workers do **not** have to be provided the special protections required in Early Entry, p. 47. However, they must be provided the following protections offered to other agricultural workers: information at a central location, pesticide safety training for workers, notification, restrictions during applications and during restricted-entry intervals, and emergency assistance. Decontamination supplies, however, need **not** be provided to no-contact early-entry workers.

2. The following are examples of situations where a worker would **not** be expected to contact pesticide residues in a treated area after sprays, dusts, and vapors have settled out of the air:

- The worker is wearing footwear and is walking in aisles or on roads, footpaths, or other pathways through the treated area where the plants or other treated surfaces cannot brush against the worker and cannot drop or drip pesticides onto the worker.
- The worker is in an open-cab vehicle in a treated area where the plants cannot brush against the worker and cannot drop or drip pesticide onto the worker.
- After a pesticide application that is incorporated or injected into the soil, the worker is doing tasks that do not involve touching or disrupting the soil subsurface.
- The worker is in an enclosed cab on a truck, tractor, or other vehicle.

